The WHELP'S REVENGE

By MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS

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It was the Rev. George Gasket who first nicknamed Tommy "The Whelp."

The Rev. George began fairly enough with the lads of his new parish. He got them together within a fortnight of his arrival and talked football and baseball to them until they were as wax in his hands. Tommy, who was fifteen and overgrown to hulkiness, hung upon his words and thought it would be fine to die for him. And then the very next week, when Tommy stumbled over his own feet and fell down with the ball, thereby letting the minister's side get a whitewash, that gentleman said irritably, "I knew The Whelp would beat us, but really it didn't seem fair to shunt him off on the other eleven."

The field rang with laughter as later the school and playground rang with it when somebody called: "Whelp! Whelp-ee! Are you goin' to eat us all when you grow up?"

Children reflect wonderfully the social color of their homes. For awhile all the parish was entranced with the new pastor—so much so indeed that a whisper against him would have been received as something between high treason and the unpardonable sin. The Rev. George was youngish, fair looking, quick and deft in phrasemaking, suave. He admitted in his private talks a temper, but said, with eyes upcast, that he kept it under by help of strength beyond his own. He was single. That of course set all the mothers in the church to work mating him suitably. He saved them the trouble of choosing for him by devoting himself to Alison Prior from the day she came home.

If only she had been home from the first, Tommy would never have been The Whelp. Tommy was Alison's brother and in many ways her chum, yet she only smiled when he explained the minister's sin and said at last:

"Really, Tommy, I don't know just what a whelp is like, but you do look very much what I fancy it is—all legs and arms, so much too big that they are in their own way and everybody else's."

When Tommy had gone away, however, trying to stand very stiff and keep his elbows primly beside him, Alison looked after him lovingly, then turned and shook her fist at the rectory, which was visible across half a mile of fields.

If only Tommy had known that; but how should he? He was a very human boy. He loved Alison so well he would have grudged her to any fellow. It was unbearable to think of her marrying that preacher and sitting perked up in the front pews, never daring to smile or whisper. Besides, there was his affront. Tommy flung himself upon the grass out in the pasture, dug his heels in the turf and thought very hard, tears resting upon his freckled cheeks.

All at once something came with a rush, struck him a sounding thwack on the back and sent him rolling over and over. As he got up he felt a harder thwack and tumbled all in a heap. When at last he scrambled up, leaping nimbly aside, to shin up a convenient apple tree, Blinky, the big Cotswold ram, stood at the tree foot, shaking his head up and down, evidently inviting Tommy to try conclusions again.

Tommy had no mind for that. Instead he sat up among the laden boughs and thought harder than ever. After a little he whistled joyfully, filled his hands with red apples and climbed down to the lowest fork of the tree. Blinky was at him in a minute, but stopped short as Tommy tossed him an apple. As soon as he had devoured it he looked inquiringly at Tommy, who tossed him another, redder and juicier than the first.

Twenty minutes after Tommy passed unscathed from the pasture, with Blinky trotting behind, a pattern of content. Every day for the next fortnight Tommy gave Blinky apples, tufts of sweet late grass, nubbins of corn and pungent dashes of salt and red oak bark. Blinky followed him like a dog, never trying to butt or chase him, though toward the rest of the human race he preserved an unregenerate mind.

Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. The Rev. George's particular madness that autumn was golf. Golf was but an idle name in the parish until he came to it. Fancy his delight, muscular, masculine and missionary, in laying out links and teaching his parishioners the game. Alison was one of his earliest and most promising pupils. They spent hours deliciously together, yet apart, upon the course. Alison was certainly devoted to the game. As to whether she was also devoted to her teacher she herself did not quite know.

Love may be slain with a laugh. Tommy was not enough of a psychologist to know that, but he did know Alison, and he laid his plans accordingly.

Upon a perfect Indian summer afternoon all the golf crowd of their parish met all the golf crowd of another parish upon the home links to settle various foursomes and other things. Alison and the Rev. George were the mainstay of the home crowd. Tommy meekly asked to be his sister's caddie and blustered a good bit when he was transferred to Mr. Gasket. But there was a twinkle in his eye as he paced soberly from hole to hazard, from hazard to tee, from tee again to bunker. It was going to be close—very much too close to be comfortable, said Mr. Gasket. He himself played a brilliant game when he did his best. But what with coaching one, managing another, welcoming everybody, home folks and visitors alike, it is not strange that he could not give his whole attention to the game.

It was a fine course, with a water hazard in the shape of a spring branch, excellent putting greens and beautifully close turf. It was by Tommy's suggestion that the turf on the Prior share of the course had been grazed down with the flock of sheep only two days before. Tommy indeed had been wonderfully active in all manner of good works for the match. Mr. Gasket knew hazily how his nickname had stuck and stung and repented having given it, but was unwise enough to think he could smooth over matters by particular complacence to the lad.

"We shall beat them by a scratch. We shall certainly beat them, Master Thomas," he said, watching a particularly clean drive by Alison. Tommy looked bored. "Don't strike me your game's as good as those other people's," he said, nodding toward the opposing players.

Mr. Gasket tried to look pained. "Why don't you say our game, Tommy?" he asked reproachfully. "We must pull together, every soul of us, if we are to win."

"Oh, you've got all those other fellows to root for you!" Tommy said sarcastically. "I couldn't do a thing but roar. I ain't nothing but a whelp, you know."

This time Mr. Gasket really did look pained, though he tried to mask it as blank innocence. It was his turn to play, and the game was so even that the fate of it hung most likely upon his next three strokes. His ball lay both well and ill—in a place that if he could successfully loft it would mean almost certain victory, but said lofting required a position neither ministerial nor dignified. It was in a little cuppy turf hollow not far off the boundary. A low fence marked the bounds. Across it sheep hustled and rummaged peacefully through weed grown stubble. The minister took no note of them nor of anything indeed save the little white ball lying so snug in the faded grass. Half stooping, half crouching, he grasped his mashie firmly in his hand.

The rest was chaos plus earthquake—at least to the Gasket inner consciousness. Friends and foes in watch saw a woolly, horny headed streak assail the stooping figure, send said figure over upon its head, then, with vigorous thumps, roll it over and over across six yards of turf. Nobody knew just what might not have happened had not Tommy bravely rushed to the minister's rescue, caught Blinky by the horns and forced him, struggling and bleating, back over the fence he had leaped like a flash of lightning.

In spite of doing all that Tommy was the first to assist Gasket to his feet. "I hope you're not hurt too bad, sir," he said politely.

Gasket was a sorry sight. His trousers were torn, his face scratched, the eye upon which Blinky had landed his last thump rapidly going out of business. The rest, hurrying up, could not help laughing, Alison clearest, merriest of them all. As Gasket caught the sound he said, backing away, "The match is off."

It was all he could say. Tommy went home with him, a faithful caddie in spite of everything, but as he left the rectory door he rubbed his hands and softly hugged himself, repeating with infinite gusto: "Yes, the match is off. You bet it is. I know my sister all right!"

Why They Were Cheap.

President McKinley used to tell with a good deal of amusement a story which related to his early days in the law. On the way to and from his office he was accustomed to pass a butcher's shop and for a long time was puzzled by a certain notice which he saw there.

In the morning he would read, "Good pork sausages, 20 cents." On his return in the evening he would sometimes find those sausages still 20 cents a pound, but more often the notice was changed, and the sign read, "Fine pork sausages, 12"—or sometimes 10—"cents."

The matter, he said, used to worry him. Sausages were not of so perishable a nature that they would not keep till the next day, and he could not understand it. So one evening he stopped at the shop, made some casual remark and then inquired the price of sausages.

"Ten cents," said the shopkeeper.

"But," replied Mr. McKinley, "they were 20 cents this morning."

"So they were, Mr. McKinley," replied the butcher, "so they were. Then I had 'em; now I haven't. Sausages at 10 cents is simply to get me a reputation for cheapness. See?"

The future president saw and was in the habit of saying that a great many reputations were made in that way.

Poisoned to Save Expenses.

A Chinese boy was brought into the Peking hospital terribly injured by a heavy log falling upon him. The doctors, to save his life, cut off his leg. The mother came, apparently to help to nurse the lad. The patient, however, almost immediately afterward died, and expert examination showed that his mother had given him arsenic. Her reason, it is supposed, was to prevent her son from the disgrace of reaching the next world in a maimed condition. This is a very strong point with the Chinese, who always pickle an amputated member to have it buried with them when they eventually die. In this instance, the family being poor and a whole leg being difficult to pickle, the simpler course was taken of poisoning the boy, so that he and his leg might go together.

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ETIQUETTE OF WIGS.

Bald Men, With Care, May Complete the Illusion They Seek.

The baldheaded man who is not resigned to his fate and who is posted on the etiquette of wig wearing adorns himself with a faithful copy of nature which simulates his poverty instead of her wealth, says the Chicago Tribune. For an artistic wig for a man is usually made thin or nearly bald on the crown, so as to allay suspicion. When the wig is adjusted to the man's head, the pink scalp shows through the white net of foundation at the crown, thus leaving a modest suggestion of baldness. This is the first principle of the etiquette of wig wearing—claim too little rather than too much of nature's covering.

This principle is carried to a refinement of perfection by the man who can afford the luxury of buying several wigs, for he may then make the transition from baldness to a semblance of his former self cover a space of two or three years and thus complete the deception, which is the aim of all wearers of wigs.

A cardinal point in the etiquette of wig wearing is that one should not wear his wig in bed. It is not proper. Some, either from motives of extreme vanity or from an unwillingness to shock the delicate sensibilities of their families, sleep in their wigs. This practice is condemned unhesitatingly. It is unclean. One should substitute for the wig worn during the day a simple nightcap of muslin, to insure one against taking cold.

In the morning, as the last touch of perfection to the toilet, the wig should be delicately adjusted and then glued to one's head. If this adjustment is carefully made and if one is wearing a really fine wig he may defy both wind and sunlight to betray that "things are not what they seem."

This careful adjustment of the wig is a most important point. It requires eternal vigilance, since a single careless adjustment means ruin. Along the edge of the wig of ordinary size are five spots about half the size of a penny where the paste or glue is applied with which the wig is made fast to the head. The paste must be carefully applied, since if it comes in contact with the hair it destroys its lifelike appearance.

A practice generally observed by the wearers of fine wigs is that of dressing the hair in a variety of ways. This is desirable, since it suggests a natural head of hair, yet this practice is perfectly possible with a really fine wig, every hair of which is separately attached to the net foundation.

Dog Cemetery of Paris.

Paris has a dog cemetery on an island in the Seine. A plain grave without a headstone may be had for $1, and the body is removed on a little wagon for a similar sum. The graves are leased, not sold. The charge for five years' lease is $5, for ten $10, for twenty $15 and for thirty $20. Very stringent rules forbid the use of ceremonies or decorations such as are used at funerals. No cross may be erected over an animal or bird, for all pets may be interred here. The inscriptions are of a curious and exaggerated sentimentality. Tola Dorian, the author, says on her pets' tombstone that if she "cannot accompany the dear and noble animals she does not wish for heaven," and on "Follette's" grave a mourner has placed these words: "My dear Follette, thou who wert always faithful and intelligent, we regret thee much; repose in peace." Near the entrance to the cemetery stands a row of battered stones from graves the leases of which have expired.

A Practical Mind.

The teacher was endeavoring to give the class some idea of the greatness of this country in a commercial sense. "Take the egg product alone," she said. "It is estimated that if all the eggs produced in the United States last year were loaded into one railway train, when the engine was pulling into Newark, N. J., the caboose would just be leaving Davenport, Ia.

"This seems hard to realize," she continued, "but the statistics are compiled by a well known authority."

A little boy raised his hand.

"What is it, Donald?" asked the teacher.

"I don't believe it's true, Miss Adair," he said. "One engine couldn't pull that train."

A Scandal Spoiled.

"Of course he and his wife seem devoted to each other now," said the jealous Miss Gaussip, "but do you think she will always be so true and all that?"

"Well," replied Miss Kidder, "I have reason to know that only last night he had occasion to set a trap for her."

"Ah! Do you know, I suspected something"—

"They more than suspected. They knew there were mice in the house."—Philadelphia Press.

Strange, Though Not Matchless.

"Cheroot is really the most marvelous smoker I ever knew."

"Hundred cigars a day or something like that?"

"Oh, no. He's temperate enough. The remarkable thing is that he always has matches himself."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

A Disagreeable Habit.

Old Grumps—Sure that girl loves you instead of your money?

Son—Absolutely. Why, she actually keeps count of the kisses I give her.

Old Grumps—Hum! That's bad. She may keep it up after marriage.—New York Weekly.

Some young fellows want everything for nothing, and when they are older they get nothing for everything.—Schoolmaster.

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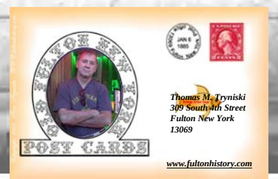
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